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Saint Helena

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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Note: The information contained in the present working paper has been derived from public sources, including those of the territorial Government, and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the administering Power under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Information was transmitted by the administering Power on 11 January 2016. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available from www.un.org/en/decolonization/workingpapers.shtml.

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The Territory at a glance

Territory: Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, a Non-Self-Governing Territory under the Charter of the United Nations, is administered by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Representative of administering Power: Governor Mark Capes (since October 2011).

Geography: Saint Helena is a small island of volcanic origin situated in the South Atlantic Ocean, approximately 1,900 km from Angola and 2,900 km from Brazil. Ascension lies 1,200 km to the north-west of Saint Helena, and Tristan da Cunha and the other small islands lie approximately 2,400 km to the south of Saint Helena.

Land area: 310 km^2, consisting of the islands of Saint Helena and Ascension and the Tristan da Cunha group.

Exclusive economic zone: 1,641,294 km^2.

Population: 4,580 on Saint Helena (September 2015 estimate); and 917 on Ascension and 268 on Tristan da Cunha (November 2015 estimates).

Life expectancy at birth: 76.4 years (women: 79.2 years, men: 72.5 years (2000-2009 estimate)).

Language: English.

Capital: Jamestown (Saint Helena), Georgetown (Ascension), Edinburgh of the Seven Seas (Tristan da Cunha).

Main political parties: None.

Elections: Most recent: Saint Helena: July 2013; Ascension: October 2013; Tristan Da Cunha: February 2013.

Legislature: Unicameral legislative assembly (15 seats, 12 elected members).

Gross domestic product per capita: £4,421 (2009/10 estimate).

Economy: Fishing, coffee, tourism, the sale of postage stamps. The economy depends on financial assistance from the United Kingdom.

Unemployment rate: 0.3 per cent (September 2015 estimate), down from 1.8 per cent in 2008.

Monetary unit: Saint Helena pound (SHP), which is on par with the British Pound sterling (GBP).

Brief history: The island of Saint Helena was reportedly discovered in 1502 by a Spanish navigator in the service of Portugal. By the end of the sixteenth century, it had become a port of call for ships en route from Europe to the East Indies. In 1633, it was formally annexed by the Netherlands. However, in 1659 the British East India Company took possession of the island. It officially became a Crown Colony in 1833, was classified as a British Dependent Territory in 1981 and became a British Overseas Territory in 2002.

I. Constitutional, legal and political developments

1. The current Constitution of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, which entered into force in September 2009, provides for the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual. The new Constitution changed the name of the Territory from "Saint Helena and its Dependencies" to "Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha", giving the three islands equal status within the Territory. The Head of the Government of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha is the Governor, who is appointed by the British Crown. However, the ability of the Governor to act inconsistently with the wishes of elected Councillors is curtailed in comparison with the previous Constitution. The British Overseas Territories Act 2002 grants British citizenship to "British overseas territory citizens".

2. The Legislative Council comprises the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, three ex officio members (the Chief Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Attorney General) and 12 elected members. The Executive Council, which is presided over by the Governor, consists of the ex officio members and five elected members from the Legislative Council. The ex officio members have no vote in either body. Elections are held by secret ballot, at intervals of not more than four years, by universal suffrage of those aged 18 years and over.

3. The 2009 Constitution contains enhanced provisions for ensuring the independence of the judiciary from the legislative and executive branches of the Government. The judicial system comprises a Court of Appeal, a Supreme Court and such subordinate courts (currently a Magistrates' Court, a Labour Regulatory Authority to determine employment claims and the Coroner to investigate certain sudden or suspicious deaths) as may be established by ordinance. There remains a final appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in prescribed circumstances.

4. During the Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, held in Managua from 19 to 21 May 2015, an elected member of the Legislative Council of Saint Helena, representing the Territorial Government, said that the Territory was and had always been proud of its association with Britain and had neither the ability nor the will to become independent. The Territory's economy was based on budgetary aid received annually from the administering Power. With the advent of the airport, the Territory was hoping and planning for an improved economy with greater self-sufficiency and autonomy, which should lead to increasing self-determination. She expressed concerns about the influx of expatriate government workers for the construction of the airport who sometimes operated without reference to elected members, which, according to her, had the effect of turning the clock back to even greater colonialism. The influx of expatriates had changed the island dynamics, resulting in social divisions and a lack of integration. There was increasing pressure to provide an easier pathway to qualifying for Saint Helenian status, which could have the eventual consequence of overwhelming the island and making Saint Helenians a minority in their own homeland. She also noted that trying to prevent this situation from happening had led to accusations of racism.

5. Referring to the demise of the ship linking Saint Helena with Ascension after the opening of the airport, the representative said that there was no definite plan by

the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to operate an air route or a sea link between Saint Helena and Ascension and that a solution needed to be found.

6. The representative said that while the 2009 Constitution had enshrined many of the human rights treaties, there was no commitment to extend the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the freedom of information. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was in the process of being extended to Saint Helena.

II. Budget

7. Owing to a small tax base due in part to migration and an ageing population, Saint Helena depends heavily on the United Kingdom for funding. The European Union also provides budget support funding. Budgetary support from the United Kingdom is used to provide essential public services and to subsidize the dedicated shipping service of the Territory. The Government of the United Kingdom does not allow Saint Helena to borrow funds. As a consequence, grants from the Department for International Development and the European Union are the only external public resources available, with a small contribution from the United Nations.

8. According to information provided by the administering Power, total budgetary aid and shipping support from the Government of the United Kingdom reached £19.43 million for the financial year 2015-2016, compared with £18.06 million during the previous period, representing a 7.6 per cent increase. The 2015-2016 aid package was approved in February 2015, following a visit to Saint Helena by representatives of the Department for International Development. Discussions for the next budget review, which will cover a three-year period, commenced in November 2015.

III. Economic conditions

A. General

9. The economy of Saint Helena depends largely on financial assistance from the United Kingdom. The largest employer is the Government of Saint Helena, and the second largest is currently Basil Read, the construction company contracted to build the airport in Saint Helena. South Africa and the United Kingdom are the two largest sources of imports. The next largest sector for employment is retail and services. The local population also earns income from fishing, raising livestock and selling handicrafts. According to the administering Power, unemployment is very low, with new jobs currently available as a result of the building of the airport and other infrastructure development. Consequently, incomes have grown strongly over the past two years, a period during which inflation has decreased significantly, with the retail price index averaging 2.6 per cent during 2014 and 2015. However, incomes are still comparatively low, and the cost of living is high, since most goods must be imported. As a consequence, prices are heavily influenced by external factors. Saint Helena expects that the opening of its airport, the construction of which started in 2011, will develop its economy by significantly increasing the number of tourists. In preparation for that influx, the Government has carried out a

three-year project to develop the policy and institutional framework required to deliver a range of core public services in an efficient and effective manner.

B. Development

10. Saint Helena is eligible to receive budget support from the European Union through the tenth European Development Fund. On Saint Helena, the funds will be used (on a cost-sharing basis with the Department for International Development) to build a safer landing facility in Rupert's Bay, which will allow large vessels to dock directly at the wharf. This is primarily for freight services. The funds will also be used for road rehabilitation and the resurfacing of 42 km of strategic roads. On Ascension, the allocation has been used to improve the roads. On Tristan da Cunha, the funds will be used for further improvements to the harbour, the investigation of alternative energy potential, upgrading the water works, improving waste management and the electricity distribution infrastructure and building capacity in the management of the lobster-processing plant. Development assistance from the Department for International Development is provided for the period 2014-2017 to support a programme of infrastructure improvements with specific outputs, based on the priorities agreed with elected members. Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha are currently making progress on the programming documentation to access the eleventh European Development Fund allocation, which will become available from 2016 to 2020. Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha also receive a proportion of the 5 million euros reserved by the Fund for isolated Territories and can benefit from regional funding.

11. Saint Helena has created a position of Emergency Planning Manager (formerly disaster management executive), the incumbent of which is responsible for the development and maintenance of plans for the island. These arrangements are overseen by the Chief of Police, who reports directly to the Governor, who is the Emergency Planning Coordinator. Civil contingency arrangements for Saint Helena broadly follow the principles of the United Kingdom Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Arrangements replicate, as far as practical, those found in the United Kingdom, but are adjusted to suit local needs. A major incident response plan has been developed and implemented. This provides a generic response in case of a major incident. This plan is being supplemented by a suite of risk-specific plans, the development of which will continue over the next 18 to 24 months through 2017. Governance of contingency planning arrangements for Saint Helena is managed through a resilience forum. Participants in the forum meet on a quarterly basis and oversee the risk register (existing and emerging threats), the development of contingency plans, testing and exercising, organizational learning through post-exercise feedback and training.

12. According to the Government of Saint Helena, during the fiscal year 2014-2015 the Sustainable Development Plan was revised, with a particular focus on the lead-up to the opening of the airport. According to the State of the Island 2015 report of the Corporate Policy and Planning Unit of the Government of Saint Helena, published for the first time in July 2015, challenges beyond the immediate priority of achieving air access are significant and include: (a) a growing population placing pressure on services, infrastructure and the environment; (b) low levels of unemployment, resulting in a lack of flexibility in the labour market and making recruitment to some critical public and private sector jobs difficult; (c) a tight labour

market, resulting in inflationary wage demands, unless such demands are matched by improvements in productivity; (d) increasing numbers of new businesses, accentuating the predominance of small enterprises on the island, which are more vulnerable to seasonality and tourism trends; and (e) price inflation likely to accelerate from the current low levels.

C. Fisheries and agriculture

13. Fisheries are an important sector of the economy of Saint Helena. According to the United Kingdom, 29 fishing boats were issued commercial licences; however, because of the continued poor fishing over the past years, only five inshore boats fished on a regular basis during 2015. The local fishermen sell their catch to the Saint Helena Fisheries Corporation. Fish purchases for the period from January to October 2015 amounted to 171.87 tons, compared with 189.4 tons during the same period the previous year. No licences for foreign fishing vessels were issued during 2014-2015. In April and November 2015, two additional local fishing businesses began fishing operations in the offshore waters of Saint Helena's exclusive economic zone. Saint Helena now has four vessels fishing the offshore waters within the exclusive economic zone.

14. In 2012 and 2013, Saint Helena exported 3,327 kg of Arabica green-tipped Bourbon coffee. In 2013-2014, 573.5 kg and in 2014-2015, 532.5 kg of coffee were exported. In 2012, the Government of Saint Helena introduced a public-private agricultural partnership policy, designed to encourage the scaling-up of production activities from small-holder farms towards the development of agricultural businesses. This has encouraged a few enterprises to expand their operations in arable crops and egg production. Risk-sharing with the private sector has been used to accelerate increases in the production of salad vegetables and eggs, areas of production in which the island enjoys a comparative advantage.

D. Transport and utilities

15. Access to Saint Helena is provided by the Royal Mail Ship *Saint Helena*, which serves Saint Helena, Ascension and Cape Town, South Africa. The vessel has been in service for 25 years. On 12 May 2015, the Executive Council approved the shipping schedule from April to July 2016 and the proposed booking policy for the final voyages of the vessel in view of the proposed official opening of the airport in 2016. Construction of a wharf is currently under way in Rupert's Bay and the bulk of the construction work is expected to be completed in mid-2016. Rupert's Wharf will enable the separation of cargo activity (to take place in Rupert's in the future) from passenger handling activity, which will continue in James Bay.

16. As noted above, the development of an airport is also under way. On 15 September 2015, the first-ever aircraft landed at the airport. A second calibration flight landed on 13 December 2015. It is expected that the Saint Helena Airport will be operational from mid-2016, with the final completion and demobilization of the construction phase of the airport project expected in late 2016. According to the administering Power, the opportunities enabled by air access should eventually make the island financially independent, freeing it from reliance on funding from the United Kingdom and the European Union.

17. The Territory has approximately 168 km of paved roads (118 km on Saint Helena, 40 km on Ascension and 10 km on Tristan da Cunha) and 30 km of unpaved roads (20 km on Saint Helena and 10 km on Tristan da Cunha).

18. Saint Helena has two local radio stations and satellite television stations that are rebroadcast terrestrially. Ascension has one local radio station and receives relays of broadcasts from Saint Helena. Broadcasts from the British Forces Broadcasting Service are available, as are television services for the United States of America military. Tristan da Cunha has one local radio station and receives television and radio broadcasts from the British Forces Broadcasting Service.

19. Saint Helena has benefited from upgrades to its electricity infrastructure under projects funded by the Department for International Development. In addition, wind power has become a reliable source of energy on Saint Helena. A solar farm that was constructed and completed in May 2015 contributes approximately 10 per cent of the island's electricity and has a peak capacity of 500 kW. This is planned to be increased further in 2016.

20. The Department for International Development has provided funding for water infrastructure upgrades. Work currently funded and in progress is the supply of treated water to the Sandy Bay properties, the increase in water storage and improvements to the raw water abstraction chambers. The institutional arrangements for the delivery of utility services changed on 1 April 2013, with the Government of Saint Helena divesting the provision of electricity, water and sewage service to a company limited by shares and initially wholly owned by the Government. Improved waste-management practices have been implemented, which has delivered the appropriate infrastructure, facilities, systems and procedures required to establish an effective long-term solid-waste management strategy for Saint Helena.

E. Banking and credit

21. The Bank of Saint Helena is the sole banking entity; it is a limited company, and the Government of Saint Helena owns the bank as a majority shareholder. The Bank's current governance structure, as a company limited by shares, includes a Board appointed by the shareholders, regulated by the Financial Services Regulatory Authority and governed by the Companies Ordinance 2004, the Companies Regulations 2004, and Financial Services Ordinance 2008 and issued Directives, and its Articles of Incorporation, issued in March 2013. It provides banking services and related financial services within Saint Helena and its sub-branch on Ascension through its core products: current, deposit and savings accounts; and personal, housing and commercial loans. The Bank offers a variety of services, including teller services, an international remittance service and online banking services, for Saint Helena customers; as from 18 May 2015, online banking services were extended to overseas customers. The Bank does not offer offshore banking services. As at 31 March 2015, the Bank's capital base comprised share capital of £3.2 million and general reserves of £2 million, with a total deposit balance standing at £75 million.

F. Tourism

22. According to the administering Power and the Government of Saint Helena, the new airport is the best way to bring new financial opportunities to the island and promote tourism. The rugged natural beauty of the Territory, its rare wildlife and its historic sites, such as Longwood House and Napoleon's tomb, are expected to attract visitors. Of the 3,241 passengers who arrived on the Royal Mail Ship *Saint Helena* in 2014/15, around 698 were excursion (i.e., leisure) visitors. A further 621 visitors arrived on yachts and 2,633 arrived on cruise ships. In 2016, the first year of air access, 2,000 leisure visitors are anticipated, with an expectation that it may rise to 7,700 by 2021, according to the administering Power.

IV. Social conditions

A. General

23. Following the reintroduction of granting British citizenship to Saint Helenians in 2002, the island experienced an exodus. Many working-age adults moved overseas, resulting in an ageing population and a declining birth rate. Evidence of this was clear in the 2008 population census, which revealed that the population had declined by approximately 20 per cent since the 1998 census, to reach 3,981 individuals, with significant reductions in virtually all age brackets below 55. The initiation of the air access project has seen a reversal of the trend, and an increasing number of Saint Helenians are returning to the island to take advantage of improved employment and business development opportunities. The estimated total population stood at 4,580 in September 2015, of which 4,031 were Saint Helenians. According to the Corporate Policy and Planning Unit of the Government of Saint Helena, since the 2008 census, the annual rate of population growth has averaged 2.4 per cent. According to the Saint Helena Statistics Office, it is expected that a population and housing census will be conducted in February 2016.

24. Measured by international standards, Saint Helena is a middle-income Territory with few signs of real material poverty. While absolute poverty is low, there are growing concerns regarding income inequality as the economy grows. According to the State of the Island 2015 report, there are signs of rising income inequality: while the top 40 per cent of earners enjoyed increases in income of more than 10 per cent, some lower earners have seen their income decrease in real terms. Consequently, while income inequality is still low in global terms, with a Gini coefficient of 26.5 in 2012/13, this was an increase from 2011/12, when it stood at 24.4.

25. The ageing population of the Territory has increased the need for substantial investment in a new elderly care programme. According to the United Kingdom, in November 2015, a total of 661 persons were receiving a basic island pension and 144 people received income-related benefits. In December 2013, both benefits were uprated to meet a new minimum income standard based on a basket of essential items needed to maintain an agreed minimum standard of living. The policy is to review the basket of essential items annually and amend the benefit payments accordingly.

26. There is one general hospital in Jamestown, as well as three health clinics serving people living in rural areas, and two residential units providing care and

support for individuals with learning and physical disabilities. It is expected that clinical areas in the hospital will be partially refurbished in 2015-2016, with the installation of improved diagnostic capabilities (including a CT scanner). In addition, the island has two family centres for children and young people who need protection and supported accommodation and two locations for vulnerable/elderly people.

27. The Lucy Faithfull Foundation conducted a child safety review during a visit to Saint Helena and Ascension in 2013 to assess progress and identify areas for improvement. The following is an account by the administering Power. The report by the Foundation was criticized by the *Wass Inquiry Report into Allegations Surrounding Child Safeguarding Issues on Saint Helena and Ascension Island*, which was published on 10 December 2015. The Wass Inquiry was commissioned by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as a result of allegations made that child sexual abuse was endemic in Saint Helena and that the Government of Saint Helena, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development were concealing child abuse. The Inquiry found no evidence of endemic child sexual abuse, corruption, a cover-up or tolerance of abuse on Saint Helena or Ascension. However, the Inquiry did find that systematic and historical failings had been made by the Government of Saint Helena in relation to health and safeguarding vulnerable people. Nevertheless, the Inquiry found evidence of significant progress having been made on Saint Helena and Ascension in relation to safeguarding. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has appointed a senior official of the Government of the United Kingdom to support the Government of Saint Helena and the Government of Ascension in implementing the recommendations made by the Wass Inquiry. The arrival of the official to Saint Helena is expected soon.

28. The Saint Helena Government Safeguarding Directorate is now fully operational and is a key component of multi-agency working arrangements led by the Safeguarding Board. Following a request and the granting of an additional £1.2 million from the Government of the United Kingdom, key additional staff has been recruited, safeguarding training has been delivered and systems to improve border security and intelligence will be procured early in 2016. Non-governmental organizations have been supported to deliver appropriate activities and their representatives have also attended safeguarding training. According to the administering Power, owing to increased public confidence in the system, the number of referrals to social services and the police has increased significantly.

29. On 6 October 2015, in accordance with the Commission for Equality and Human Rights Ordinance of July 2015, the Governor appointed the first members of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights, for a period of two years. The Commission is charged with, among other things, promoting an understanding of the importance of human rights; encouraging good practice in relation to human rights; and promoting awareness, understanding and the protection of human rights. The permanent Human Rights and Equality Office held its opening day on 10 December 2015.

30. The 2015 International Women's Day was celebrated on Saint Helena with a Fun Day, organized jointly by Women's Issues Saint Helena and the Girl Guides Association, with the theme of "Empowering women — empowering humanity: picture it". The theme envisioned a world in which each woman and girl could exercise her voice to participate in politics, receive an education, have an income and live in societies free from violence and discrimination.

31. At the fourth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, held in London on 1 and 2 December 2015, the United Kingdom and overseas territory leaders agreed upon a communiqué in which they committed to further joint work to extend the core United Nations human rights conventions to the Territories, where those had not been extended already, and stated that the Government of the United Kingdom had undertaken to ensure that pending requests from the Territories would be taken forward as soon as possible.

B. Employment

32. According to the State of the Island 2015 report, the largest local employers are the Government of Saint Helena, Basil Read (airport construction contractor) and Solomon and Company (retail, shipping and financial services). The majority of employment elsewhere is in the retail, infrastructure (telecommunications, electricity and water) and services sectors. The accommodation and hospitality and agricultural production sectors are growing but, at present, these comprise primarily owner-operated businesses that employ relatively few people. A minimum wage for Saint Helena was introduced in June 2013 and set at £2.30 per hour (equivalent to around 62 per cent of the median income). This has recently been reviewed and increased to £2.60 per hour, effective 1 July 2015. In addition, the Government has enacted new legislation to regulate the terms and conditions under which people are employed, with a first phase that includes paid holiday and sick leave and equal pay for women.

33. A significant number of Saint Helenians are employed offshore, particularly on Ascension, in the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)[1] or in the United Kingdom. Many contracts for offshore employment are for unaccompanied workers, resulting in a significant social burden and the dislocation of families. In addition, according to the administering Power, the loss of trained staff to better-paid offshore employment makes it necessary to bring in a range of internationally recruited staff in a number of sectors.

34. As a result of the construction of the airport, which started in late 2011, the demand for workers increased significantly. In November 2015, some 290 Saint Helenians were employed on the project either directly or through subcontractors. Of those, 62 have returned from abroad to work on the project. At the height of the construction phase of the project, more than 400 Saint Helenians were employed by the airport contractor. The release of workers from the airport project as construction nears completion has benefited other sectors of the economy where labour force availability has been a constraint. With only 10 individuals in receipt of unemployment allowance (December 2015), equivalent to 0.5 per cent of the economically active population, the lack of additional labour-force capacity constrains growth in the private sector.

[1] A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

C. Education

35. Education is compulsory and free for children between 5 and 16 years of age. There are currently four schools in operation, comprising three all-through primary schools (for pupils aged 3-11 years) and one secondary school (for students aged 11-18 years). Students over 16 may opt for United Kingdom-accredited academic or vocational courses. Since September 2009, distance-learning opportunities have been included in the curriculum of the secondary school. The Education and Employment Directorate is also responsible for the training and retraining of people in the public and private sectors, through its Lifelong Learning Service. Education standards on Saint Helena have shown improvement in recent years, with significantly improved performance at General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSE) levels in 2014 and at the primary level in 2015. According to the administering Power, there is a need, however, to further consolidate gains and ensure consistent improvement and high performance.

36. Retaining qualified, experienced staff continues to be a challenge. A plan and training are now in place to raise the overall quality of teaching through professional development, and this has been linked to recently introduced professional standards for the teaching profession. In January 2016, internationally accredited qualifications will become available on-island for teaching staff through a partnership with a provider from the United Kingdom. According to the administering Power, a new salary structure for education now provides significant rewards for teachers who pursue improved qualifications.

37. In 2014, 49 per cent of pupils achieved five or more GCSE with a grade C or higher, including in English and mathematics, compared with 19 per cent in 2012. Performance dropped again in 2015 at the GCSE level, but A-level results rose significantly. Primary education standards continue to improve, particularly in reading, where 78 per cent achieved United Kingdom standards. Overall, however, primary standards still lag some way behind United Kingdom benchmarks, particularly in mathematics.

38. Saint Helena also offers robust programmes to support adult learners, with a range of academic and vocational courses on offer through the Lifelong Learning Service. An apprenticeship scheme is available to help young persons to prepare for entry into the workforce. It is also available for adult learners who feel the need to improve their skills or to retrain to access available job opportunities. Programme provision for adult education is informed by an island-wide training needs assessment, which seeks to align the provision of training with the current and upcoming needs of the economy.

D. Environment

39. According to the administering Power, the isolated position of Saint Helena has given rise to an unusual and remarkable array of terrestrial and marine flora and fauna. Saint Helena has a high level of endemicity, and approximately 30 per cent of species endemic to the United Kingdom and its overseas territories are found there. As more baseline biodiversity surveys are undertaken and knowledge and understanding of species increase, new endemic species may be found. Both the natural and cultural heritage of Saint Helena are its key assets and a key building

block on which to establish a tourism industry, although both areas have been negatively affected by a lack of investment over a long period of time. Saint Helena relies heavily on project funding to support conservation initiatives. In late 2014, the island was successful in receiving the approval of three bids for funding totalling £519,316 under the Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund (Darwin Plus). In 2015, the island received approval for two bids totalling £375,688.

40. While some waste management, for example, hazardous-waste management, continues to be a challenge for the island, a capital-funded solid-waste management project has brought about improvements. In addition to a redeveloped landfill site, a public recycling facility has been established and the clean-up of homes and island areas has benefited from the introduction of a free service for the collection of bulk waste. Currently, most waste streams are still going to landfill, including commercially viable wastes such as metals, glass, plastics, paper/cardboard and kitchen waste, equal to 76 per cent of disposed domestic waste. According to the administering Power, there is a potential opportunity to establish commercial recycling on the island, and while the Government is ready to lead in this area to maximize the use of the redeveloped landfill site, there is also a view that the private sector should develop businesses that process and reuse waste materials.

41. The Environmental Protection Ordinance, providing a legislative framework for the conservation of biodiversity, the control of pollution, hazardous substances, waste and litter and the consideration of environmental impacts in decision-making and environmental monitoring, was passed by the Legislative Council on 13 November 2015.

V. Ascension

A. Constitutional and political status

42. Executive authority for Ascension is exercised by the Governor of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha. A resident Administrator is appointed by and reports to the Governor. The Governor is advised by an Island Council, comprising seven elected members and three ex officio members: the Administrator, the Director of Resources and the Attorney General. Ex officio members have no voting rights. The current Administrator of Ascension, Marc Holland, was sworn in on 26 August 2014. The Administrator represents the Governor of the Territory, is the Head of the Government of Ascension and, as an ex officio member, chairs the Island Council in the Governor's absence.

43. Elections are held every three years, the most recent general election having taken place in October 2013. All registered voters over 18 years of age are eligible to vote. Under the 2009 Constitution, the Governor continues to have legislative authority over Ascension. However, he is constitutionally required to consult the Island Council before making any laws. Ascension has its own legislation but Saint Helena law applies to the extent that it is not inconsistent with local law, insofar as it is suitable for local circumstances and subject to such modifications as local circumstances make necessary. On 22 October 2015, Ascension celebrated its bicentenary with a series of events, including a flag raising ceremony and the official opening of the new Bicentenary Park.

44. There are five full-time Saint Helena police officers on detachment to Ascension, including the senior officer of inspector rank, who reports to the Director of Police on Saint Helena. The Chief Magistrate on Saint Helena serves as the Magistrate on Ascension, supported by four local lay magistrates. The Saint Helena Public Solicitor provides legal advice to residents and is supported by two local lay advocates and an assistant public solicitor.

B. Economic and social conditions

45. Residence on Ascension is dependent upon employment, and consequently, according to the administering Power, the population of Ascension enjoys full employment. Residents of Ascension have no right to abode, although some have been on the island for over 50 years and have children and grandchildren residing there, according to the administering Power. Services are mostly provided by the Government. A private sector company provides the water and electricity supply to most of the island, with the United States base providing its own supply. There are no commercial exports and little indigenous food production. The economy is somewhat fragile and is dependent upon the defence and communication organizations based on the island. As a result of the economic situation, the population has dropped to under 900 people. Government activities are funded through business levy, property tax, income tax and Customs duties. The revenues raised cover the expenditure necessary for the provision of essential public services. There is a continued requirement to invest in the island's infrastructure, balanced with the need to create sufficient liquid reserves.

46. Offshore fishing licences were sold from June 2010 to December 2013. A total of 170 licences were sold over the period, and, according to the administering Power, they contributed significantly to the economy. The sale of licences was placed on hold in 2014 while an expert study was carried out to review a management approach allowing the Government to develop income through licensing, improve management of the fishery, meet its international obligations and protect wider biodiversity. There are a small number of inshore fishing boats providing the local community with fresh fish. Sport fishing continues to develop, bringing more visitors to the island each year.

47. Health services are provided through the fully functioning Georgetown hospital. If treatment is not possible locally, cases are referred to the United Kingdom. In support of a healthful lifestyle, two gyms on both military bases, three swimming pools and other sporting facilities are available to all islanders.

48. On 9 October 2015, the Government of Ascension and the Government of Saint Helena announced that an air service providing a direct link between Ascension and Saint Helena would be available by the time the Royal Mail Ship is decommissioned in July 2016 and would operate initially on a frequency of once every four weeks, for a trial period of one year.

49. The school in Two Boats provides education to all children from the age of 3 to 16, which is the General Certificate of Secondary Education level. A Safeguarding Children's Board is in place and members include a social worker and representatives from the police and the health and education sectors. There are a number of groups and clubs available to children outside of school, and a community centre was opened in Two Boats in 2014, through funding from various

sources and the help of volunteers. It features a variety of equipment for band and music, exercise, art, movies and games. Child safeguarding on Ascension is covered in the section on Saint Helena above.

C. Environment

50. In its fifth national report to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, submitted in April 2014, the United Kingdom noted that biodiversity did not represent a great contribution to the local economy, with the exception of offshore marine fishery, which was a significant revenue source from licence fees. The island has the second-largest nesting population of the green turtle in the Atlantic Ocean and the largest nesting population of any marine turtle species in all of the United Kingdom overseas territories. The biodiversity of Ascension is greatly threatened by alien invasive species and by introduced plants and mammals in particular.

51. The Conservation Department continues to develop and has succeeded in implementing a number of projects, such as programmes dealing with seabirds, invasive species, endemic plants, land crabs and fisheries. Partners in those projects are: the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Darwin Initiative, the South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute, the Overseas Territories Environment Programme and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee. With the establishment of the National Park of Green Mountain, there are now six nature reserves, grouped as beach and bird nature reserves. A Biodiversity and Fisheries Protection Committee has been set up to work with the Conservation Department and stakeholders in order to formulate legislation for the protection of the island's biodiversity and fisheries. A low volume of tourism is also developing within this sector.

VI. Tristan da Cunha

A. Constitutional and political status

52. Executive authority for Tristan da Cunha is exercised by the Governor of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha. A resident Administrator is appointed by and reports to the Governor. The Administrator is advised by an Island Council, comprising the Administrator, who is President of the Council, eight elected members (including a Chief Islander and at least one woman) and three appointed members. Elections are held every three years. All registered voters over 18 years of age are eligible to vote. Under the 2009 Constitution, the Governor continues to have legislative authority over Tristan da Cunha, but, for the first time, is constitutionally required to consult the Island Council before making any laws.

53. Tristan da Cunha has its own legislation, but Saint Helena law applies to the extent that it is not inconsistent with local law, insofar as it is suitable for local circumstances and subject to such modifications as local circumstances make necessary. As a last resort, the laws of England and Wales apply. There are two special constables and one full-time police officer. The Administrator also serves as the Magistrate.

B. Economic and social conditions

54. The economy of Tristan da Cunha is based on traditional subsistence farming and fishing. Rock lobster is sustainably fished and exported to Australia, the European Union, Japan and the United States. The decision by the European Union in August 2014 to allow access to its market to lobsters from Tristan da Cunha was a major milestone.

55. Since 2007, Tristan da Cunha has enjoyed improved telecommunications. Internet access is now available to the community through an Internet cafe and a Wi-Fi system.

56. In 2009, the Island Council set out broad strategies to secure the island's financial future. According to the United Kingdom, even with such reforms, the island would very soon become insolvent unless further drastic measures were taken. In 2011, a thorough review of budgets was undertaken and strict rules on procurement and expenditure were introduced. According to the administering Power, external financial assistance with infrastructure projects continues to be needed.

57. The Department for International Development funds the positions of resident doctors. In order to build capacity on the island, it also funds the positions of a clinical nurse, a new Finance Officer, a new Commercial Officer, the Education Adviser and the Director of Public Works. The Department also sponsors annual dental and biennial optometrist visits as well as visits with other medical specialists, as and when required. It has been a number of years since Tristanians had access to off-island training, but, since 2012, the Department has also funded training both on and off the island (the latter in the Isle of Man and South Africa). This training has been provided across the Tristan Administration covering the following areas: fisheries, tourism, post office services, public works, communications and information technology.

58. Pupils leave school at the age of 16 and tend to work in the Government or the fishing sector. They have no opportunity to proceed to higher education unless they leave the Territory. The current staff members are, by their own admission, poorly trained. There are now two trainee teachers in the pipeline. In September 2009, an education adviser sponsored by the Department for International Development began a two-year posting on the island, during which he delivered training to local teachers. Since that time, two further education advisers have been appointed.

C. Environment

59. Tristan da Cunha is successfully implementing a number of conservation projects, with help from its partners, including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The projects run by Overseas Territory Environmental Programme include efforts to remove invasive species from uninhabited islands in the Tristan da Cunha group and studies on the feasibility of eradicating rodents. Tristan da Cunha also has a biodiversity action plan to help it to meet its commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity. This was updated in 2012 to cover a five-year period, until 2017.

VII. Relations with international organizations and partners

60. As a Non-Self-Governing Territory of the United Kingdom, Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha are associated with, but not part of, the European Union. The Territory is a member of the South Atlantic Territories Cooperation Forum.

61. Since January 2014, the Territory has been a partner of the European Union under Council decision 2013/755/EU of 25 November 2013 on the association of overseas countries and territories with the European Union, which was approved in an effort to move away from a classic development cooperation approach to a reciprocal partnership that promotes sustainable development and the values and standards of the European Union in the wider world.

VIII. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the territorial Government

62. Information on political and constitutional developments regarding the status of Saint Helena is reflected in section I above.

B. Position of the administering Power

63. On 15 October 2015, at the 7th meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) during the seventieth session of the General Assembly, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that the relationship of the Government of the United Kingdom with its overseas territories was a modern one based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each territory to choose to remain British. The Government of the United Kingdom and its territories recognized that their special relationship brought mutual benefits and responsibilities.

64. He went on to say that, since the publication in June 2012 by the Government of the United Kingdom of a white paper entitled *The Overseas Territories: Security, Success and Sustainability*, the United Kingdom had worked closely with its territories to further develop those partnerships. His Government had consolidated the annual meeting with the leaders of the territories into a Joint Ministerial Council, with a clear mandate to review and implement the strategy and the commitments set forth in the paper. His Government's fundamental responsibility and objective under international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, was to ensure the security and good governance of the territories and their people.

65. At the fourth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, held in London on 1 and 2 December 2015, the United Kingdom and overseas territory leaders agreed upon a communiqué setting out, among other things, the joint position of the United Kingdom and the overseas territories on self-determination. In the communiqué, the political leaders and representatives stated that leaders of the overseas territories were democratically elected by the people of the Territories and were accountable to them and that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

applied to the peoples of the overseas territories. They reaffirmed the importance of promoting the right of the peoples of the territories to self-determination, a collective responsibility of all parts of the Government of the United Kingdom. They committed to explore ways in which the overseas territories could maintain international support in countering hostile sovereignty claims and agreed that the fundamental structure of their constitutional relationships had been the right one — powers had been devolved to the elected Governments of the territories to the maximum extent possible consistent with the United Kingdom retaining those powers necessary to discharge its sovereign responsibilities — while agreeing on the need to review the effectiveness of constitutional arrangements over time.

IX. Action taken by the General Assembly

66. On 9 December 2015, the General Assembly adopted resolutions 70/102 A and B without a vote, on the basis of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples for 2015 (A/70/23) and the subsequent recommendation by the Fourth Committee. Section IX of resolution 70/102 B concerns Saint Helena. In that section, the Assembly:

(a) Stressed the importance of the 2009 Constitution of the Territory and the further development of democratic and good governance;

(b) Requested the administering Power to assist the Territory by facilitating its work concerning public outreach efforts, consistent with Article 73 *b* of the Charter of the United Nations, and in that regard called upon the relevant United Nations organizations to provide assistance to the Territory, if requested;

(c) Requested the administering Power and relevant international organizations to continue to support the efforts of the territorial Government to address the socioeconomic development challenges of the Territory.